

Environmental Justice Community Outreach



Department of Toxic Substances Control

*DTSC is one of six
Boards and
Departments within
the California
Environmental
Protection Agency.
The Department's
mission is to restore,
protect and enhance
the environment,
to ensure public health,
environmental
quality and
economic vitality,
by regulating
hazardous waste,
conducting and
overseeing
cleanups, and
developing
and promoting
pollution prevention.*

State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency



What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice is defined in California law as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies”

Department of Toxic Substances Control defines environmental justice as “equal application of environmental protection for all communities and citizens without regard to race, national origin or income.”

Environmental justice is a movement within low-income, minority communities concerned with reducing and eliminating potential “disproportionate” health and economic impacts associated with past and present industrial pollution.

Does DTSC Address Environmental Justice?

DTSC has recognized and addressed environmental justice issues over the years by encouraging community members to participate in the decision-making process. The focus has been on addressing cultural and community needs by:

- establishing an Environmental Justice Coordinator in the Education and Outreach Unit, Office of External Affairs
- providing translations and interpretations when appropriate
- inviting community leaders to participate in developing outreach activities
- requesting input from all people where environmental justice is of concern

How Can DTSC Improve Its Environmental Justice Efforts?

DTSC has a draft Environmental Justice [policy](#), outlining the department’s direction on EJ. Additionally, we are working with the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) as it implements its [EJ Action Plan](#).

In 2002, DTSC expanded its commitment to providing fair treatment for all Californians by hiring an Environmental Justice Coordinator to develop and implement a more wide-ranging and comprehensive program.

The Environmental Justice Coordinator focuses on identifying areas throughout the state that are affected by hazardous waste and then works to increase communication and reduce negative effects on those communities. A major element of this effort is conducting community assessments where environmental justice unease exists.

DTSC will identify regional environmental issues, communication mechanisms and demographic data that will improve understanding, coordination and communication between DTSC and those communities.

The Environmental Justice Coordinator also audits DTSC's outreach efforts to communities with environmental concerns to ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to address those concerns. The audit function will also ensure that all DTSC programs are in compliance with the federal and state environmental justice laws.

Does DTSC's Environmental Justice Program Meet U.S. EPA Goals?

DTSC's Office of External Affairs is working closely with the United State Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) Office of Environmental Justice. The joint efforts have produced an environmental justice curriculum and a series of training opportunities for staff members.

Is Environmental Justice Addressed in State or Federal Law?

In 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898, intended to ensure non-discrimination in federal programs that deal with public health and the environment. It also focuses federal attention on environmental and public health policies in minority and low-income communities. For more information, contact: www.weact.org/ej_principles.html

In California, legislation signed into law during the late 1990s centralizes coordination of environmental justice programs within the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. It requires the participation of other state agencies including the California Environmental Protection Agency. Other legislation requires Cal/EPA to develop an interagency environmental justice strategy, and to report periodically to the Governor and Legislature on the implementation of environmental justice strategies.

The State of California is the first state to adopt and implement environmental justice legislation into its environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

- SB 115 (Solis, Chapter 690, Statutes of 1999)
- SB 89 (Escutia, Chapter 729, Statutes of 2000)
- SB 32 (Escutia, Chapter 764, Statutes of 2001)
- SB 828 (Alarcon, Chapter 765, Statutes of 2001)
- SB 1542 (Escutia, Chapter 1003, Statutes of 2002)
- AB 1553 (Keeley, Chapter 762, Statutes of 2001)
- AB 1390 (Firebaugh, Chapter 763, Statutes of 2001)
- AB 1360 (Steinberg, Chapter 664, Statutes of 2003)
- AB 1497 (Montanez, Chapter 823, Statutes of 2003)
- AB 2312 (Chu, Chapter 994, Statutes of 2002)

To review the above legislation in its entirety please go to www.leginfo.ca.gov.

Where Can I Get More Information About Environmental Justice?

In 1991, the first National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit adopted the principles of environmental justice. These principles stated that all people have the right to participate meaningfully in the environmental decision-making arena, as well as a right to a healthy and safe environment. For additional information about the environmental justice movement visit www.weact.org/ej_principles.html

For more information

about DTSC's environmental justice program, contact Vanessa Byrd, Environmental Justice Coordinator, at (916) 322-6920 or at (800) 72TOXIC (1-800-728-6942). Also, you are welcome to send an e-mail message to Vbyrd@dtsc.ca.gov or visit DTSC's Web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

TDD users can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378.